



# Department of Justice

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## **CONVICTED SEX OFFENDER PASSES ON TRIAL, PLEADS GUILTY TO PRODUCING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY**

**MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA**— Earlier today, only minutes before opening statements were set to begin in his federal child pornography trial, Ricky Randall Rex Smith, 55, notified United States District Judge W. Keith Watkins of his intent to plead guilty, U.S. Attorney Leura G. Canary announced. Smith had been charged back in 2007 with producing, transporting, and possessing visual depictions of minors engaging in sexually explicit conduct, and his trial had been pending for more than a year.

As the jury sat waiting to be impaneled, a plea hearing was held before Federal Magistrate Judge Susan R. Walker, during which Smith admitted that he had filmed the sexual abuse of several minor children in his care, including a three-year-old girl. Most of the abuse occurred in May 2000 inside a house in Longview, Texas. Smith also confessed to transporting videotapes of the abuse into Dale County, Alabama sometime in 2005, where they were subsequently discovered in his possession.

Title 18, United States Code, Section 2251(a) makes it a crime for any person to employ, use, persuade, induce, entice, or coerce an individual who has not attained the age of 18 to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of that conduct. The crime in this case was completed when Smith brought the videotapes across state lines, thereby

invoking federal jurisdiction.

According to court documents previously filed in the case, the explicit tapes were found by a private citizen months after Smith abandoned them in a homemade camper trailer on December 31, 2005. It was later discovered that Smith had a 1983 conviction out of Crawford County, Missouri, for sodomy of a child under fourteen, and that he had been a fugitive from justice for nearly 18 years. While he was on the run, Smith used numerous aliases and kept on the move, living at times in Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Wyoming, Montana, Colorado, California, Texas, and Alabama. He was finally caught and arrested in Louisiana in June 2006.

Producing child pornography carries with it a minimum prison term of 15 years. However, because he already has a prior sex conviction involving a minor, Smith could receive a mandatory life sentence under the federal “two strikes and you’re out” law, codified at Title 18, United States Code, Section 3559(e). In addition, Smith faces as much as a \$250,000 fine and a lifetime term of supervised release. A date for Smith’s sentencing has not been set.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. In May 2006, the U.S. Department of Justice launched Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by United States Attorneys’ Offices, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit [www.projectsafechildhood.gov/](http://www.projectsafechildhood.gov/).

The investigation of this case was conducted by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, acting in concert with officers from the Ozark Police Department and the Hartford Police Department. Assistant United States Attorneys Nathan D. Stump and Brandon K. Essig are prosecuting the case.

